



DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

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*For Release*

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*Feb 9, 1977*

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TO: The Deputy Secretary  
FROM: ARA - William H. Luers, Acting

Your Meeting with Argentine Charge Prat Guy  
Saturday, February 12, 12:00 noon

PARTICIPANTS

US

The Deputy Secretary  
Terence A. Todman, ARA  
Robert W. Zimmermann, ARA/ECA  
(notetaker)

ARGENTINA

Charge Gaston PRAT GUY  
PHONETIC: PRAT GUY  
ADDRESSED: Mr. Charge  
d/affaires

CHECKLIST

- Demonstrate sympathy for terribly difficult problems of terrorism which the Argentine government confronts.
- Point out the Administration will not apply a double standard in its approach to human rights, treating Latin America in one way and the Communist world in another.
- Note that domestic actions are, of course, Argentina's own affair but that such actions will clearly affect our relationships.
- Express your personal hope that Argentina will take steps in the field of human rights which will allow us to continue working together.

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### SETTING

Unless there is a significant change in the Argentine human rights situation in the next few weeks, our ability to maintain useful relations will be seriously compromised. While we have conveyed through diplomatic, military [ ] a coordinated set of signals about USG concern and the kinds of measures that could avoid a "consistent pattern" judgment, we continue to miss a basic element in our representations - that of high-level concern. The GOA has interpreted the high-level remarks of the previous Administration as a license to do what was necessary to end the terrorist problem quickly.

We seek your involvement because Argentina is different from Chile and Uruguay. It is closer to being a nuclear weapons power than Brazil; and it enjoys salience in South America because of its economic weight and cultural preeminence. No other state in Latin America has been less receptive to U. S. influence than Argentina; too overt a posture against Argentina might well rally the nationalistic Argentines behind an increasingly unpopular military government.

### BACKGROUND

Argentina's failures are noteworthy:

- It has not had stable political institutions for at least 30 years;
- It set the world record for inflation in 1975;
- It has been suffering from the best-organized, most brutal terrorist movement in our hemisphere (comparatively, it is as though 100,000 Weathermen were under arms in the United States).

Given the situation in Argentina in March 1976, the principal Argentine criticism of the military coup was that it took so long. While the new government adopted the necessary and correct measures to alleviate its immediate economic problems, its approach to counter-terrorism was extreme. Torture and other forms of human degradation are being employed routinely, and a McCarthyite mentality prevails in GOA dealings with the Church and academic institutions.

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We have been conveying with an increasing sense of urgency the fact that unless the Argentine Government reins itself in, our relations are in jeopardy. We have, in effect, told the GOA that we will have to vote against loans in the Inter-American Bank. The GOA knows that FMS credits may be lost. We have begun to restrict munitions control licenses. It appears that we soon may vote against Argentina in the UN Human Rights Commission.

We are uneasy, however, that once we pass the point of no return, our ability to pressure for human rights improvements will be curtailed severely.

TALKING POINTS

-- Mr. Charge d'affaires, I want your government to understand that the new Administration appreciates the extraordinarily difficult situation which your country confronts.

-- Nor should there be any doubt in your mind about a double standard in the area of human rights, as I hope our statements on Soviet dissidents Sakharov and Ginsburg, Hubert Matos of Cuba and Czechoslovakia show.

-- I would like to be certain that you convey these two points to your government.

-- It is a third point that brings us together today, however. In the long run the basic vitality of Western civilization will be determined by its attachment to human rights and legal forms.

-- This Administration is concerned that your government, which has gained the upper hand in its war against terrorism, does not appear to be addressing itself to waging the peace which must follow any victory.

-- Your flank in the United States now stands exposed, and we will have no other choice but to speak out against torture and witch hunts in the name of subversion.

-- Domestic actions are, of course, entirely your prerogative, but we should also be clear that they will affect our relationships.

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-- (If the Charge asks what steps we suggest):  
I would not presume to dictate, but I know my colleagues have discussed with your government the urgency of identifying those under detention to their families and the public, as well as the need to punish those guilty of alleged excesses. Further international review by responsible international bodies might also be helpful.

-- Mr. Charge, we value our relations with Argentina, and I would have felt remiss if I had not personally made this appeal to your government to take the steps needed to ensure our ability to continue working together.

Attachment:

Biographic Information

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Drafted:ARA/ECA:FERondon:jc  
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GASTON PRAT GUY

PHONETIC: Prat Guy

Gaston Prat Guy is 42 years old and a career diplomat. After graduating from the University of Buenos Aires, he earned a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of California at Berkeley and a master's degree in international relations from The American University. He entered the Argentine foreign service in 1959. In addition to assignments at his ministry and Montevideo, he has served five years in Washington (1961-66) and five years at the United Nations (1971-76). His English is fluent.

Prat Guy is an admirer of American institutions; he has special respect for Adlai Stevenson. Given his educational and working experience in the United States, he is perhaps closer to our country at this point than to his own.

He is the divorced father of five children.



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
UNITED STATES MILITARY GROUP, ARGENTINA  
APO NEW YORK 09671

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE AMBASSADOR

Subj: Fred Rondon's letter of 4 February 1977

1. The Ambassador asked for comment on the subject letter.
2. The first four paragraphs regarding reducing credits to \$15,000,000 are an accomplished fact now, but I doubt the Congress <sup>will</sup> approve even that amount; feel sure they will not now that the GOA has indicated they will not accept it. It would have been much better if Mr. Vance had not announced it publically as he did in open hearings, but tell the Argentines privately the reason for the cut.
3. Regarding the fifth paragraph, as I mentioned to the Ambassador earlier we had a TWX in December 1976 telling us to inform the GOA of the \$36,000,000 for FY 77 and to obtain a list by priority of what the GOA would buy with the money. The GOA accepted the loan and the list was provided State in January 1977. The agreement between State and the Argentine Ambassador in Washington has not been signed for the FY 76 Credits. The hold on signing the agreement, as far as I can tell, is at State or somewhere in the administration. I would like to see the agreement signed ASAP so the GOA could start using the credits before any sanctions are cut off of credits, but I doubt it would be wise to push the issue at this time. However, we have gone so far with processing the FY 76 agreement, we should go ahead and sign it - not hold it up unless specifically told to do so by Congress or the President. It would be better to sign it before the hearings on the FY 78 Security Assistance Bill which are now starting.
4. Regarding the second and third paragraphs of page 2, they have a difficult task in trying to say what items of equipment are for external defense versus internal security, just as difficult as saying which is an offensive versus defensive weapon. The GOA considers they are at war with an internal enemy, the terrorist. After all these years of emphasizing

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US support for internal security, the GOA cannot understand why we refuse to support them now. We have no evidence that the GOA is using tear gas to harass the civilian populace or in any human rights violations.

*Robert W. Tart, Jr.*  
ROBERT W. TART, JR.  
COL, USA  
Commander

*Copy sent Confidential/Personal  
to Fred London.  
K.L. 3/11/77*